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Alaska Can Save the American Eagle

THE BIRD OF OUR NATIONAL HISTORY THREATENED
WITH EXTINCTION

By WILLIAM T. HORNADAY

Director, New York Zoölogical Park since 1896, and an initial power in the promotion of preserves and laws for the conservation of wild life in America

THE American "Bird of Freedom," inseparably associated with the Stars and Stripes since the beginning of the American Republic, today is under attack, and its race will succumb to extermination unless relief arrives at once. And there can be only one adequate relief. The legislative body of Alaska must repeal its bounty law—for to put a price on the heads of the members of a species of wild life, as has been done on the bald eagle throughout Alaskan territory, is the one surest way to exterminate that species.

The soldier graves in France record the toll of the many Americans who lost their lives as they fought under the American flag and followed the lead of the American eagle in the great World War. Here in America for the period of the war millions of school children the country over have daily saluted the American flag. Have they been taught about the American Eagle? Perhaps in our devotion to the "Stars and Stripes," we have somewhat forgotten "Old Baldy," which our forefathers chose more than a century ago as the standard bearer of the nation, and which is immortalized in our literature and on our coinage. Its wild bold ranging of cliff and sky typified the liberty the American colonists sought and they adopted the great bird

as the emblem of American freedom—yet through the act of Americans the living race of the eagle is today traveling the quick road to oblivion!

Two years ago the territorial government of Alaska was misled by stories of alleged "destruction of salmon and game" perpetrated by eagles, to enact a blanket law and offer a bounty of fifty cents a head for eagles, either the golden or white-headed species, throughout the territory. This was in opposition to the practice of the United States Department of Agriculture during the last twenty-five years. The policy is against paying bounties even on hawks, and this policy is based on the research and experience of more than half a century.

The bald eagle, however, is particularly a harmless bird in most localities. Living along river margins and the sea-coast, it has small opportunity to feed upon the game animals of more wooded areas. Its favorite food is fish and in Alaska it feeds on the salmon which die on their spawning beds after spawning. As all salmon die in this way surely a share of them may be granted as the eagle's lawful prey.

Now it is entirely conceivable that in small areas here and there in America, eagles, or bear, and even such gentle creatures as bobolinks, doves, and rob-

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of Mr. James A. Allison, of Indianapolis. It is equipped with forty-eight tanks and four pools and will be provided with a thirty-five-foot collecting power boat.

THE activities of scientific men in connection with the late war have resulted in a large volume of post bellum discussion with regard to organization and coöperation in scientific research. There is, for instance, a controversy between the protagonists of coöperation as against those who maintain that all productive scientific work of importance must be carried on by individual initiative. Dr. C. L. Shear, pathologist of the United States Department of Agriculture, in an article in the *Scientific Monthly* aims to reconcile these opposing views. Dr. Shear illustrates the necessity for coöperation by problems in plant pathology requiring the technical knowledge of pathologists, mycologists, entomologists, pomologists, and experts in refrigeration and marketing. The wide expert knowledge involved in such problems could not have been encompassed by a single individual, nor could it have been effectively partitioned among a number of scientists working independently, but it required the closest coöperation and mutual understanding. On the other hand, special problems not requiring too great a field of knowledge can be more effectively attacked by the individual working alone. But "Darwins and Edisons are rare. The future advancement of science must depend chiefly on the combined efforts of the mass of faithful seekers of truth whose names may never appear near the top of the scroll of honor of the world's greatest scientists." Both forms of research are required and there is plenty of scope for each.

THE all too numerous surgical contingencies of the world war have been the cause of many new departures and expansions among which are the successful experiments of Dr. Serge Voronoff in human grafting, described in a recent number of *La Revue*.¹ Four months after the war started Dr. Voronoff established a department of osseous grafting at the Russian Hospital in Bordeaux where he received a large number of patients suffering from lesions accompanied with loss of bone. It was deter-

mined that the transfer of bony tissue was most successful if made from the patient himself and for this purpose the fibula served well. This thin bone in the leg is vestigial in man and can be dispensed with. Grafts were sometimes cut from the tibia, especially for repairing the arm bones, or fragments of the fractured bone were employed. Use of bones from the recently dead was also found feasible up to eighteen hours after death. In the transplantation of bones of other animals to man Dr. Voronoff has had some success, but he has definitely shown that this method does not produce a true graft, the animal bone merely serving as a scaffold for the growth of new human tissue. Such operations cannot ordinarily be performed until several months after the original wound has healed, as the tissues must be entirely healthy. The work now in hand as a result of the war is a task which, according to Dr. Voronoff, will consume ten years of continuous effort.

THE shortage of essential minerals in European industry has given prominence to the recently effected settlement of the political status of Spitsbergen with its mineral riches and future possibilities. Dr. R. N. Rudmose Brown, British Arctic and Antarctic explorer and medalist of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, has lately published the first satisfactory account in English of this archipelago² which he has had opportunity to study personally. Dr. Brown gives an account of the physiography, geology, fauna, and flora, mineral wealth, and a detailed history ranging from the early whalers and trappers to the treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Germany and Soviet Russia in which these two governments agreed to the internationalization of this island. Twenty-two illustrations from photographs, mostly by Dr. W. S. Bruce, picture effectively the topography and life of Spitsbergen, while a map reproduced from the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* outlines approximately the principal mining claims of Britain, Norway, Sweden, and Russia.

THE Mineralogical Society of America was organized by a group of mineralogists

¹ Cf. May Tevis, "Human Grafting." *Scientific American Monthly*, Vol. I, 1920, p. 307.

² *Spitsbergen*. By R. N. Rudmose Brown. Published by J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia; Seeley, Service & Co., Ltd., London, 1920.